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Patriotism Aiding Piety.

BY REV. THOMAS BRAINERD, D. D.

PATRIOTISM AIDING PIETY.

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

PHILADELPHIA,

ON THE 30TH OF APRIL, 1863,

THE DAY APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES FOR

Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer.

BY REV. THOMAS BRAINERD, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA:
WILLIAM F. GEDDES, PRINTER.

1863.

Philadelphia, May 1st, 1863.

REV. THOMAS BRAINERD, D. D.

REV. AND DEAR SIR—The undersigned, having heard with much pleasure your patriotic and eloquent discourse, delivered in Pine St. Church the 30th ult., on the occasion of the President's proclamation of a National day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer, respectfully solicit from you the privilege of a copy, in order to have the same published and widely disseminated in this community.

In the language of a distinguished writer of our Revolutionary era, “These are the times that try men’s souls;” when the feather-bed soldier and the sunshine patriot shrink from their country’s aid in the hour of danger. Believing that it is a religious duty to stand, with every energy we can command, by the Government in its struggle with secession and treason, we are always happy to hear decided and unequivocal sentiments of Christian patriotism in the sermons and prayers of our Pastor.

We remain yours most truly,

ROBERT J. MERCER,	W.M. TAYLOR,
WILMON WHILLDIN,	HUGH STEVENSON,
JOHN C. FARR,	W.M. F. GEDDES,
F. J. DREER,	JAS. W. QUEEN,
GEO. YOUNG,	MORGAN G. PILE,
SAMUEL WORK,	EDWIN KING,
W.M. M. FARR.	

REPLY.

Philadelphia, May 1st, 1863.

Messrs. R. J. MERCER, F. J. DREER, J. C. FARR,
WILMON WHILLDIN, and others.

GENTLEMEN—The Sermon to which you refer was written in haste, and for the occasion; but if you think its publication will do good, it is at your service. Next to the approbation of God and my own conscience, I prize the approbation of true men. From my knowledge of the earnest and universal patriotism of my beloved people, I was not surprised, while I was gratified, at the high moral tone of your letter. I only regret that the Sermon so feebly represents its great object.

With great respect and affection,

I remain your pastor and friend,

THOMAS BRAINERD.

PATRIOTISM AIDING PIETY.

"For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place ; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed : and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this ?"

ESTHER, iv. 14.

These words of Mordecai to his adopted daughter Esther, the wife of a king, seem to have a relevance to our circumstances to-day. Haman, a proud noble, had entered into a foul conspiracy against the lives of the Jewish people. His real motive was disappointed ambition and personal malice; but like other conspirators, he so contrived to veil his cruel selfishness, under a pretence of regard for the public good, that he procured from the too credulous and unreflecting king, Ahasuerus, a decree that the Jewish nation should be destroyed. For this license to murder men, women and children, Haman agreed to pay into the treasury of the king ten thousand talents of silver. As the laws of the empire forbade any one to approach the king without invitation, and as Haman so kept the

king's attention that no invitation was likely to be given, it seemed that the destruction of the Jews was certain.

But there was one man whose eyes were open, and whose heart was yearning to save his people. This was Mordecai. Determined to employ the influence of Esther for the salvation of Israel, he contrives, through a trusty messenger, to send her the words of the text.

It was a bold and stirring message, such as queens seldom hear. He tells her in substance :—

(1.) That his confidence was unfailing in the ultimate salvation of his people. Remembering the covenant God made with Abraham; remembering the prayers which had been offered for his people by the pious dead; remebering the promises of Jehovah, and his past deliverance in times of danger; remembering the infinite resources of God, he doubted not that, if Esther proved unfaithful, “enlargement and deliverance would arise to the Jews from another place.”

(2.) Mordecai boldly advertises Esther that if, in cold selfishness or coward fear, she sought to screen her own life and shelter her own interests by abandoning her people in their hour of peril, by such separation from duty she would separate herself also from Divine protection, and be left to the fate which she richly deserved. If she failed to shelter God's people, God would fail to shelter her. God would

allow the first blow to fall on one too selfish to ward off the blow from her nation.

(3.) Mordecai encourages Esther to estimate her position and lofty calling. “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” God may have given thee the noble mission to save thy nation. He has invested thee with personal beauty; he has given thee the heart and the hand of Ahasuerus; he has made thy home a palace, and seated thee on a throne, not to gratify thy vanity and love of splendor; not for thy safety in the day of thy nation’s peril, but as an angel of deliverance. Who knows but there is a proud destiny reserved for thee, to use thy elevation to lift up thy down-trodden people?

The soul of Esther was worthy of a daughter of Abraham and of Mordecai. It rose with danger and difficulty. To save the life of her nation, she at once determined to go over *the letter of a law*, over the custom of her sex, and to hazard her own life that her nation might not die. Her bearing indicated deep piety as well as patriotism.

She returned to Mordecai this answer: “Go, gather together all the Jews that are in Sushan, the palace, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink for three days and nights: I also and my maidens will fast likewise: and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.”

She would fast three days, with her maidens. This

was in accordance with the spirit of piety among those who feared God. In time of trouble, of deep sorrow, we lose our appetite for food; and in time of high health and prosperity, fasting sobers us, and puts the soul in a better frame for humiliation and spiritual meditation.

In the law of Moses it is commanded, Lev. xxiii. 27, “Ye shall afflict your soul,” (i. e.) ye shall humble yourselves before God, by inward penitence and outward abstinence from animal indulgences. Joshua and the elders of Israel, under the defeat of their armies at Ai, prostrated themselves upon the ground before the ark of the Lord, from morning to evening, without eating. The Eleven Tribes, invaded by the inhabitants of Gilead, fell upon their faces before the ark of God, and so remained until evening, fasting. At Mizpeh the Israelites, pressed by the Philistines, assembled before God and fasted until the evening. David fasted in the sickness of his darling child. Moses fasted forty days on Mount Horeb. The prophet Elijah fasted as many days. Jesus began his painful ministry by a fast of forty days. Even the heathen city of Nineveh held a solemn fast, under the fear of God’s judgments, denounced by the prophet Jonah. The Saviour told his disciples, that when the “bridegroom was taken away,” when they were in trouble, “they should *fast* in those days.”

Hence the apostles fasted in the ordination of deacons. Cornelius was *fasting* and praying when he

received the angelic visit. It was when the disciples ministered to the Lord and *fasted*, that the Holy Ghost said, separate Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto I have called them. The Pilgrim fathers, and the patriots of the Revolution, often held days of fasting and prayer. All Christian churches, Papal, Episcopal and Puritan, have made provision for days of fasting.

Esther, then, did but conform to the mind of the church in all ages, when, in trouble and perilous responsibility, she sought the help of God by fasting and humiliation. A custom so venerable for antiquity, so universal, so divinely approved, of such eminent example and so often blessed, must have its high uses and solid reasons. Let us glance at some of these reasons.

(1.) As under high spiritual emotions or deep sorrow, appetite fails, may not fasting have been the natural result as well as the means of deep religious earnestness? If we push away the pleasures of the table when we mourn the loss of a beloved wife, husband, parent or child, may we not also abstain when we mourn for sin, as one mourneth for a first-born?

(2.) As the Sabbath was designed to interrupt our business and our gains, to give us leisure and disposition to cultivate spiritual growth and life, may not abstinence from our accustomed table indulgences for the sake of our religion, aid our estimate of the value of piety? Religion that costs nothing is ordinarily

worth nothing. The martyrs who bled for Christ, loved Him the more. Suffering for a cause is an investment of the heart in it; and as we are called to no outward reproach, loss or pain for our religion, we may find compensation for such discipline in voluntary fasting, prayer, Christian labor and charity. Our Roman Catholic maidens who fast every Friday, and anticipate the morning light for their matin masses, gain an interest in their Church and a fidelity to it which is worthy of imitation by Protestant youth.

(3.) Resolute and voluntary abstinence from food when hungry, for the sake of our religion, not only gives the world a higher estimate of the value of God's service, but it accustoms us to subordinate our inclinations to our duty. It compels our appetites to bow to our consciences, and thus gives us strength to resist the temptations of "the world, the flesh and the devil." He that, from a religious motive, can voluntarily deny himself a tempting repast, is preparing to rise above the clamor of any appetite, passion or evil influence. He that never denied an inclination for duty, holds his virtue in the market.

(4.) By accustoming ourselves to occasional voluntary self-denial in our day of prosperity, we get a discipline to aid us to bear trouble in our adversity. The Roman soldier, who bore an armor of one hundred and fifty pounds' weight on parade, in times of peace, developed a power of muscle and endurance that made him alike the conqueror of

the Briton in the cold North, and the Ethiopian of the burning South.

The source of the sin of Sodom was said to be “fulness of bread.” High health, pampered appetites and voluptuous indulgence generate secularity, worldliness, pride, lust, ambition, boasting, independence of God and contempt of men. Such persons, by occasional fasting, would gain a calmer reflection, a better view of their frailty, more sympathy with men and more fear of God.

(5.) Fasting and humbling ourselves in the day of our country’s sorrow, puts us in sympathy with those who are suffering for their country’s salvation. Esther and her maidens, in the palace of Ahasuerus, would not touch the royal dainties while their Jewish brethren were in peril of life. The noble but deeply injured Uriah, said to David : “The Ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents ; and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields ; shall I then go into mine house to eat and to drink ? As thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.”

While five hundred thousand of the youth of our land are far from home and kindred, subjected to malarious climes, resting on the damp earth, restricted to coarse food and to obey men often unworthy to command ; while thirty thousand more wasted, heart-sick, are pining in hospitals ; while some languish half starved amid the filth, and vermin,

and insults of Southern prisons, and while all our noble army are in the perils of war among malignant traitor foes ; when we think of their bitter disappointments under defeat and disaster, their untended sick-beds, their pining for home, their weary marches and their frequent deaths from wounds, neglect and fever ; is there a soul here not disposed for one day to fast with them, and so to repent and pray that God shall give these suffering soldiers support and victory ? In view of our bleeding country, we may to-day in penitence, prayer and piety, hang our harps on the willows, and say : “ If I forget my country or its defenders, let my right hand forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.” If one member suffer, all the other members suffer with it. Abstinence for a single day will give us a living sympathy for our defenders ; who for us and their country have often been compelled to feel the pangs of hunger.

(6.) Fasting is an appropriate emblem of our conscious ill desert. As the ancient Hebrew, in the days of his humiliation, laid aside his pleasant apparel, and robed himself in coarse sackcloth, and put ashes on his head, and prostrated himself in the dust, in token of his guilt, his penitence, and his dependence on God ; so it is appropriate to-day for this nation, by abstinence and prayer, to humble ourselves under God’s judgments, and say, God be merciful unto us, miserable offenders !

We have used our blessings boastingly, as if we

deserved them ; we have feasted at our full tables, in forgetfulness of God ; we have relied on our prowess and strength, without God, to subdue our enemies. Victories have often been followed by no thanksgiving, and defeats have been met with atheistic calmness or murmuring discontent. Far from the personal perils and sufferings of the dreadful strife, we have enjoyed our home comforts, and forgotten the sufferings of our countrymen ; we have schemed for wealth with a heart-covetousness as keen as ever ; and some among us have not even offered a prayer for the success of our arms.

But this day is for our reflection, our humiliation, and our amendment. If our children to-day see us intermit our noon-tide meal ; if they mark the fulness of our confessions, and the fervor of our prayers, that God would forgive our sins and the sins of our people ; if our children behold this, they will have the evidence that our religion is a reality ; that we believe God governs the world ; that it is a fearful thing to sin against him, and that all national blessings are dependent on his will.

This was the mode in which Esther and Mordecai began their efforts to save their nation ; and this is the service to which the President of the United States invites us to-day. In both cases, patriotism prompted piety.

But let us accompany our fast with humiliation and confession of sin.

It will be an alleviation of our national troubles and military defeats, if by them we are made better men and better women. We cannot govern others ; we are but indirectly responsible for the sins of others ; but to make the nation penitent and humble, individuals must become penitent and humble. Repenting of our own personal sins, confessing them before God in our closets, in our families and in the sanctuary, we may hope that others will do the same, until this great nation lies humbled at the feet of God. Our great work to-day is with our own hearts and lives. Let us do a thorough work of personal reformation, that like Esther we may be prepared to go in before the King of kings.

We are also to confess the sins of our people, as did Daniel. This admission of our national sinfulness, as the just cause of our national judgments, does not compel us to believe that we are more guilty than other nations, nor that we have backslidden from the virtues of our fathers. Each age has its own virtues and crimes ; and every age has crimes to deserve God's judgments. "Say not that the former times were better than these, for thou dost not judge wisely concerning this thing."

My impression is, that in Sabbath keeping, and attention to the means of grace, in efforts to diffuse universal education and the circulation of religious truth, by Bibles, tracts, churches, preaching and Sunday-school teaching ; in efforts to establish institutions

for the aged, the imbecile, and the unfortunate ; in endeavors to help the sailor, the prisoner, the widow and the orphan, our own age and land have developed a piety and charity not common in the world.

Indeed, I cannot avoid suspecting that this war is on our hands not because this age and people are worse than other times and men, but because we have risen to a higher principle, a holier aim, and more adhesive regard to justice and humanity. We held the price of peace in our hands.

Our Southern brethren had a right to manage their own affairs in their own way, within the limits of the Constitution ; to take their own time and mode to regulate their relations to the colored race, leaving the Press of the land free. This right was awarded to them, not alone by the Constitution, but by the solemn declaration of the President and a resolution of Congress. It was endorsed by the sentiments of ninety-nine hundredths of the North, who, claiming liberty to speak and write their honest opinions of slavery, as did Washington, Jefferson and Franklin, would still have abhorred any and every attempt to enforce by violence their views upon the South. The whole North, almost before a blow was struck, protested its respect for every Southern right. But all would not avail ; something more was wanting.

If we could have consented to stultify the conscientious suffrages of the great majority, as to planting slavery, with its fetters and manacles, on the free soil

of our territories ; if we could cheerfully have agreed to stand as sentinels through all time, to drive the escaping slave back to his bondage ; if we could conscientiously have commended a system which shuts out four millions of our fellow men, in our own land, from reading God's word, from lawful marriage, from family integrity and purity, and from the right to fair wages for their toil ; if we could have cherished at the capital the shambles where men and women are bought and sold, and could have heard the slave-dealer's lash on bleeding flesh without pity ; if we could have disgraced labor by contempt, and flattered the pride of those who grow rich on the uncompensated industry of other men ; if we could meekly have allowed the slave lords of the South, accustomed to rule over menials, whom they had by force degraded to their feet, to rule through all time over us, there would have been *no war.*

If we could have allowed our fellow citizens at the South to be tarred and feathered, because they were true to their country ; if we could have permitted our mints, arsenals, forts and vessels to be seized, our Generals to be bribed to treason, and our soldiers on the frontiers surrendered as prisoners to those whom they had gone to protect ; if we could have allowed our country's flag to be trampled in the dust by traitors, and our garrisons to be hailed out of our own burning forts by bursting shells ; had we borne this submissively, there would have been *no war.*

But would peace in these circumstances have marked our virtue or our corruption? our glory or our infamy? Our war is the proper protest of justice and humanity, against injustice, cruelty and perfidy. It is the struggle of right and philanthropy, against outrage, oppression, and bloody treason.

We have received from ages gone by the fruits of man's long struggles for civil and religious liberty, and the right of self-government; we have received a broad, beautiful and healthful country, to every foot of whose soil we have an equal claim as citizens; we have received a civil constitution, which embraces the concentrated wisdom of the sages of the Revolution; and we have taken up arms to declare that no traitor hand shall cut the telegraphic wire on which these blessings are passing down to other generations. The cry of humanity, from ages to come, has called us to this bloody strife. It is simply a defence of our own institutions.

In such a contest we are not to interpret any defeats into an impeachment of our national virtue, or our cause; but rather regard them as a moral discipline through which God purifies us from remaining corruptions, to make us "perfect" for our high national mission, "through sufferings."

The war has certainly unveiled an appalling amount of individual selfishness, covetousness, fraud, cowardice and perfidy. But it has also shown in our people a pure, unselfish patriotism, developed in the

pecuniary sacrifices of the rich and poor; in the devotion of their lives by hundreds of thousands of our young men; in the rich, unfailing charities, especially of our ladies, for the suffering soldiers; in the patient suffering of our martyrs in the hospital or on the battle field. War has ennobled as well as tried us; and I must thank God to-day for the grace he has given you, as well as exhort you to be penitent for your sins.

While I say this, I still believe that our sufferings are made necessary by our sins, and that the nearer we approach to holiness, the fewer will be our disasters and the more certain our triumphs.

When we have "learned righteousness" from the judgments of God, we may expect Divine judgments to be removed, for he does not "afflict willingly." Besides, this universal penitence and reformation would impart purity to our motives and efficacy to our prayers. A nation imbued with the spirit of piety, justice and magnanimity, combined as these graces always are with courage and united earnestness, would be irresistible. It would be prepared to subdue its enemies by the power of its virtues as well as the force of its arms. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." If, with the spirit of holiness, we go forth to vindicate law, order and justice, we shall so strike the consciences of rebels, that it will be hardly necessary to smite with the sword of the Magistrate.

What our personal sins are, we best know ourselves. "If I regard iniquity in my heart," says David, "the Lord will not hear." How sad for us if indulged sin bars from Heaven's throne our cries for National deliverance! Our skepticism and cavilling; our religious apathy; our neglect of prayer, Bible reading and the sanctuary; our covetousness, pride, evil speaking and unkindness; our worldliness and ambition; our cold formality and frequent insincerity in devotion; of all this we should repent to-day.

The weapons of the soldier to be effective must be kept clean. So if our prayers avail to bring God with us into this conflict, and that is what we most need, we must be pure in heart and life. What a motive is thus furnished to those who have fathers, sons, or brothers in the camp, to so prepare to go into the presence of God that he shall give these fathers, sons and brothers victory in the day of battle! We have a work then to accomplish to-day. We are to triumph over sin in ourselves, so that our prayers shall give our soldiers triumph over our foes. We must gain a victory to give them victory.

We have also national sins to bewail to-day. Some of these are obvious, and universally admitted.

Ingratitude, Sabbath-breaking, profanity, intemperance, gambling, under-mining and over-reaching selfishness, fraud and lying; lack of parental fidelity, and of respect for parents and for age; stinted charities, and prayerless and Godless lives; who doubts that all

these cry to heaven for judgment against us ? No wonder God is disciplining us by national disasters. Our defeats and delays will be blessed, if they lead us to put away all these sins. We have been scourged into sober reflection. May this reflection lead to national reformation.

But have we not other sins as a nation, not so often seen or lamented ? Our boasting pride in our eighty years of prosperity, our contempt of other nations, our bitter and unfraternal spirit in the long past towards the sins of Southern brethren, when a better temper might have saved them; our cherished hatred and contempt of our colored brethren, manifested in endorsing their bondage at the South, and their persecutions in the North; the cold selfishness of a party spirit, willing to sacrifice nationality and freedom for party triumph ; our public men hypocritically professing patriotism, as an avenue to the salaries of office, or to gainful contracts ; rank bribery shamelessly practiced in our halls of legislation ; our highest Judicial Tribunal, for party ends, taking away the shield of law from a feeble race among us ; men of influence coldly standing by, and from party motives, allowing traitors of the South to plot and begin treasonable operations in the Capitol itself ; clergymen, back-sliding from all the teachings of their fathers and of the church, justifying chattel slavery by the word of God, and encouraging their fellow citizens, for the interest of slavery, to make war on the Government

of their country; clergymen in the North endorsing this apostacy and rebellion in the South, apologizing for traitors and the treason, which has filled our land with blood, abusing their own Government, and refusing even *to pray for the success of our soldiers and sailors, as under their lawful chief magistrate they "bear the sword against evil doers."*" And in this hour of the nation's peril, how many are coldly indifferent, or carping fault-finders; how many are using the patriotic sacrifices of the nation, to feed party prejudice, or to fill their pockets! If this day of fasting softens such hearts, humbles us, and purifies us, it will also ennable us, and make us mighty in renewed virtue and in the blessing of almighty God.

Mordecai and Esther combined in prayer and fasting as a preparation for salvation. Oh, that all dwellers in our land, of every creed and party clique, in church and state, could unite in common penitence to day! This would give to all a holy, patriotic unity of purpose and action, before which treason would pale, and on which would rest the smile of God's countenance.

But Mordecai refused to exalt any instrument above a covenant-keeping God. He knew Esther's influential position and fitness for the work, but he boldly tells her if she failed to act, the cause would still triumph. "*If thou at this time shall altogether hold thy peace, then shall enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place.*" To

Esther was given the noble privilege of saving her people. But the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had not suspended his grand purposes of good to Israel, on the will or patriotism of a frail woman like Esther. If she proved selfish, or timid, or treacherous, God would raise up other and better agencies, and Israel should have deliverance.

So in our imperilled country, I do not believe that its ultimate unity, peace, safety and freedom are given up to the final keeping of any one man, however lofty, nor any clique or party of men. Our country needs all; but if those who ought by interest, sacrifice and prayer to come to its rescue, coldly stand aloof to see their country perish, they will be disappointed. They will not see it die. They, themselves, will go to their dishonored graves, and their memory will be hissed by other generations; but their country, saved by better men, will rise beautified by its trial and blessed of God and man. Of this I have not a doubt.

There are causes mightier than men, on which we may rely for national salvation. The chain of God's Holy Providence, with its ten thousand links of marvelous care and mercy, which has reached down to us through nearly three centuries, is not to be broken by the first blow of treason. God did not lead Israel out of Egypt to perish in the wilderness. By the range of our mountains and valleys, by the course of our mighty rivers, by the necessities of our commerce,

by our common origin, language, and religion ; by the prayers and martyrdoms of our common ancestry ; by our common historic recollections and general literature ; by the recorded counsels of our sages, like Washington, Madison and Jackson ; by our long cherished complacency and hopes, as citizens of this great country ; by the voice of twenty millions of freemen, and, as I believe, by his own holy purpose, God has spoken the unity of these States ; and “what God has thus joined, no man nor clique of men can put asunder.”

Local jealousies, state pride, peculiar institutions, conflicting opinions, party strifes, personal rivalship and ambition, mutual recrimination, foreign intrigues, may be so skilfully used by demagogues, south and north, as to produce a temporary separation ; but, as the waters divided by a central rock in the stream, must obey the general laws of gravitation and unite below the obstruction, so the people of these United States, in spite of the present conflict, will finally yield their caprices to their necessities, under the great law of their geographical position and the constraint of Divine providence. A peace with secession, is, in my estimate, an impossibility. If such a peace were patched up to-day, it would be temporary, leading to new intrigues, and repeated and bloody wars. Whether twenty millions or six shall govern this continent, or whether the whole people or an oligarchy shall rule it, are questions which our posterity will not leave open.

Again, when we look at the deep ground-swell of human sentiment in favor of liberty throughout the earth, at the hopes which our example has inspired, at the prayers which are offered for us by earnest Christians in all lands, and at the beau ideal of blessings so familiar to our twenty millions by past experience, we see how improbable it is that freedom here can fail.

In this struggle of government against treason, of order against anarchy, of universal education against ignorance, of civilization against semi-barbarism, of liberty against despotism, of true and noble men against conspirators; it would be an atheistic impeachment of God's justice, to assume that he will by miracles oppose us; and unless he does thus interfere against us, his ordinary blessing, for which we hope, will be our salvation. He may discipline us by defeats, he may try us by delays, but what he has done for us in the past is the pledge of our final success.

It would also be an impeachment, not only of God's justice, but of the manhood, the patriotism, the virtue of this nation, to assume that we can fail in this contest. With Northern health and energy, with abundant wealth, with mechanical skill and resources, with the prestige and authority of the Government and our national flag, with the military and naval schools, with the armories, the entire navy, and the fortresses, with six hundred thousand men in the field, and the gathered military experience of two full

years, it is absurd to suppose that twenty millions of loyal people are not able, with God's blessing, to subdue six millions of rebels against their country. It is only to resolve it shall be done and it will be accomplished.

I am not willing to assume, that however earnest and bitter may be the zeal of their political discussions, or the violence of their antipathy to men or measures, that any considerable party of northern men are so besotted and craven, so selfishly near-sighted and suicidal, as to consent for any reason or at any time to the ruin of their country. Individuals there may be who, by jeering at our defeats, parading the horrors of battle-fields, lampooning our generals and chilling the courage and patriotism of our young men, may do much mischief; but I am not willing to believe that they represent any party. I choose rather to believe that our distinguished fellow citizen, G. M. Dallas, who publicly pledged "the last dollar in every purse, and the last drop of blood in every heart," to the country's salvation, represented the final spirit of our twenty millions. If so, our success is merely a question of time.

It would also be an impeachment of recent history to assume our failure. In spite of the beggared treasury, the divided counsels, the total inexperience, the want of men and arms, the treason of our public men and military officers at the beginning of the conflict; in spite of the difficulties of operating on an unheard-of scale in an enemy's country, and against

foes intelligent, brave as ourselves, and more practised in arms and familiar with violence ; in spite of all this, in two years, the rebellion has been, by God's aid, driven from Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri ; from a considerable portion of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Louisiana ; from New Mexico, and the Cherokee Country, and from parts of Florida, and South Carolina. With the exception of some few cities, rebellion has been exiled from our entire coast. All this in two years. In the same proportion, less than the seven years given to our Revolution, will plant the stars and stripes on every foot of the soil of our country.

Had our success been constant, and our triumph early and complete, we should have lost the sifting process, by which pretension has been rebuked, and zeal, patriotism and worth elevated ; and by which we better know ourselves, and the motives and value of our would-be great men. By the disasters and horrors of war, God has rebuked the selfish chivalry which would make bloodshed a pastime ; and has thus by war, given us lessons likely to promote in our posterity the spirit of peace.

We went into the war proudly, with unschooled sectional ambition ; and God has, by defeats, humbled us, and I trust purified us. But his mercy has not failed us. We have not realized all our hopes, but God has enabled us in two years past to raise more soldiers for their country, provide more arms and armaments, build more vessels, collect more money, fight

more battles, gain more victories, and conquer more territory, than was ever before done by any nation since the world began. We have not gained all we desired, but more than we deserved; and while we humble ourselves, we thank God for his rich mercy, to-day.

If some Esthers among us, from whom we had hoped better things, have “altogether held their peace,” from prayer for our success, or from labors for their country, God has raised up enlargement and deliverance from another place. So it will be. If God’s people, like Mordecai, in penitence, fast, pray and labor; the false, or silent, or cavilling Esthers, will destroy, not their country, but themselves. They, and “their fathers’ house,” under the stain of their infamy, will, like Benedict Arnold,

“ Go down,
To the vile dust from whence they sprung,
Unwept, unhonored and unsung.”

From what I have said, you will infer my deep conviction, that the battle for our country’s life is, in its controlling causes, to be fought at the North rather than in the South. Traitors at the South cannot destroy this Government, if they be not aided by traitors in the North. A Northern citizen crying “peace!” with rebels armed and eager to dismember their country, betrays the nation’s honor; palsies energy, by exciting doubts as to our success; weakens the moral tone of the soldier; takes from him his motive

to dare and his consolation under disaster, by implying that his cause is weak, and not adequate to justify his martyrdom ; that no honor will welcome him home, and no pension sustain his age or his wounds. The Northern traitor also impairs the pecuniary credit of his country, and strengthens that of the rebels ; and while he withholds from the Government the aid to conquer, he at the same time prolongs bloodshed, by encouraging rebels to hold out against the Government.

Such modern Esthers, refusing to speak for their country in its peril, are very unlike the daughter of Mordecai. Prepared by fasting and prayer that God might attend her, she says : If I am to perish, I will not die a traitress to my people : “ *I will go in before the king, and if I perish, I perish!* ” Noble woman ! she periled all and gained all. She gave herself to duty, and God has given her a name to be undying on earth, and blessed in Heaven.

Let us follow her noble example, and go for our country into the presence of the God of nations, to-day. The object of this day as a national fast is this : to give us such a spiritual reformation, such access to God and power with Him, that He will hear our prayer for victory over our enemies and restore an honorable peace. He who never prays, he whose sins prevent answers to prayer, and he whose perverted conscience will not allow him to pray for the success of our arms, have little interest in the object of the day. Patriotism to-day aids our piety,

by asking us so to purify ourselves that by our prayers we can secure for our Government and our armies God's providential favor. He who believes his prayers are efficacious, and yet refuses to give them to our armies in the field, voluntarily withdraws his aid from his Government, and abets treason. The soldier might as well refuse to discharge his musket, or the quartermaster to distribute to the starving soldier his daily rations. Such should remember that fearful text from which President Samuel Davis, of Princeton, preached an eloquent sermon in the French war: "*Curse ye, Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.*"

While we pray for Divine aid to subdue rebellion, it is not necessary to cherish any malignant or unchristian emotions towards the persons of rebels. As God abhorred and punished rebellion in Heaven without malevolence, we may imitate his holy example, towards rebels against rightful authority on earth. Treason is the chief of crimes, because it removes the guardianship of law, lets loose the worst passions, and thus generates all crimes. The wasted treasure and time, the alienated families, the moral evils, the hardships of the soldier in the camp, the wan faces of fifty thousand hospital inmates, the torn limbs of the battle field, the hundred of thousands of dying victims, the wail of broken-hearted widows and helpless

